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Sue Ellspermann
LT. GOVERNOR

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**Lt. Governor Ellspermann Announces the Cities of Huntingburg and Wabash
as the 2014 Stellar Communities Designees**

Indianapolis - Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann announced today that the City of Huntingburg in Dubois County and the City of Wabash in Wabash County have been named Indiana's 2014 Stellar Communities Designees. These communities were selected from a group of six finalist communities.

Established in 2011, the Stellar Communities program is a collaboration between the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA), the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to support community planning and development initiatives. The program pools funding sources for a variety of projects identified by the communities as key elements in their comprehensive strategic development plans.

Lt. Governor Ellspermann commented, "The Stellar Communities designation program benefits all communities who participate in the selection process. In many of the communities, preparing the application has brought people together for thoughtful conversation about the future of their city or town. Since 2011, nearly 30 rural cities and towns have received planning grants and used the Stellar Communities program as a catalyst for positive developments in their communities."

Congratulating the 2014 designees, she added, "The committees from Huntingburg and Wabash prepared outstanding plans that impressed our selection team. The transformational projects proposed by both communities are examples of the positive economic impact that can be achieved through thoughtful planning and broad-based public and private sector commitment."

Huntingburg's proposal focuses on transforming and connecting the community and driving economic investment. Major projects include the development of workforce and senior citizen housing, the construction of the Heritage Trail as well as the Maintenance and Emergency

Shelters. Infrastructure improvements are the extension of 9th Street, reconstruction of 14th Street, improvement of gateways and the 4th Street waterline along with the creation of the 4th Street Market Park. The total cost estimate for their strategic investment plan is \$40.7 million with a funding gap of \$10.3 million.

The proposal from Wabash plans to connect destinations in the city by enhancing streetscapes, making gateway corridor improvements and extending pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The city plans to invest in neighborhoods through residential improvements and the expansion of downtown housing opportunities. The total cost estimate for their strategic investment plan is \$28.3 million with a funding gap of \$12.7 million.

Lt. Governor Ellspermann and agency representatives will travel to both communities for “Stellarbration” events to celebrate the designation with each city. Details will be announced at a later date.

Funding for Stellar Communities comes from multiple existing federal programs. Both cities have proposed projects involving public and private dollars; although the communities have been designated Stellar, the projects are proposals and no specific funds are guaranteed. Both communities will meet with representatives from the state agencies in the coming weeks to discuss details of the proposed projects including feasibility, available funding, timeframes and partner participation.

Fourteen communities submitted proposals for the 2014 Stellar Communities program. After evaluating the plans, the top six communities were chosen as finalist communities which received planning grants and were then required to submit strategic investment plans detailing projects, partnerships and proposed sources of funding. . Site visits were then conducted by staff, with representatives from each of the three partnering agencies following a standard agenda and set of questions.

North Vernon and Greencastle were named pilot Stellar Communities in 2011, Princeton and Delphi were named in 2012 followed by Richmond and Bedford receiving the designation in 2013.

In 2012, the Stellar Communities program was nationally recognized with the Presidential Award for Innovation by the Council of State Community Development Agencies.

Eligible applicants must be a Local Unit of Government which includes a city or an incorporated town not entitled to direct CDBG funding through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The community must also not be located in an urbanized planning area of a Metropolitan Planning Organization.

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Sue Ellspermann serves as the 50th Lieutenant Governor of Indiana. As Lt. Governor, Sue manages six state agencies including the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, the Office of Defense Development, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, the Office of Tourism Development, the Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the Indiana Housing and

Community Development Authority. For updates from Lt. Governor Ellspermann and the agencies she oversees, sign up at www.lg.in.gov.